

REMARKS

The applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough examination of the application and requests reexamination and reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner objects to claims 12 and 25 stating they would be allowable if re-written in independent form. The applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter and presents herewith new claims 28-29 in response which correspond to claims 12 and 25 respectively.

The Examiner rejects the remaining claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0046421 to *Horvitz et al.*

Horvitz relates primarily to e-mail management and prioritization and a methodology that allows personalization of various options (profile options, routing options, and the like) to manage and prioritize e-mail. See *Horvitz*, page 1, [0007-0009].

The claims of the subject application do not relate to e-mail prioritization nor are the applicant's claims limited to messages in the form of e-mails. Instead, relationships among members of a social network are automatically characterized by determining the purpose of a message (an acceptance, a decline, a request, a question, or the like) and the patterns detected in the messages (frequency of interaction, latency in response, successful completion ratio, and the like). See claims 1, 7, 8, 15, 20, and 21 of the subject application. Because the purpose and pattern of the messages are analyzed, the output of the applicant's claimed method and system is a characterization of the relationships amongst the members of the social network (by assigning a score, determining hierarchy, reciprocity, social capital, efficiency, and the like).

Horvitz does not, contrary to the Examiner's contention, determine the purpose of the message as claimed by the applicant. Therefore, *Horvitz* cannot teach characterizing the relationships amongst the members of the social network based on the purposes of the messages.

Instead of determining the purpose of the message as claimed by the applicant, *Horvitz* determines only the *importance* of the message. Importance can be determined by the *recipient's* activities (e.g., how quickly e-mails are opened or deleted) (*Horvitz*, pg. 5 [0071]), or text in the message (e.g., "can you meet...") (*Horvitz*, pg. 13 [0159-0168]).

Horvitz never determines, either from the recipient's activities or the text in the message, the purpose of the message. Instead, based on the *recipient's* activities and/or the text in the message, *Horvitz* determines the importance or urgency of an e-mail and even then only after the recipient has personalized various options (such as profiling options, routing options, and the like) to manage and prioritize e-mail.

And, since the purpose of the message is not determined by *Horvitz*, no relationships can be characterized as claimed by the applicant.

In summary, the output of *Horvitz* is an e-mail's importance/urgency; the output of the applicant's claimed system and methods of claims 1 and 15 is an ingenious characterization of the relationships amongst the members of a social network based on the purpose of the messages and a pattern detected in the messages.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 15 are allowable, as are the claims dependent therefrom.

Each of the Examiner's rejections has been addressed or traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is respectfully requested.

If for any reason this Response is found to be incomplete, or if at any time it appears that a telephone conference with counsel would help advance prosecution, please telephone the undersigned or his associates, collect in Waltham, Massachusetts at (781) 890-5678.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirk Teska', written over a horizontal line.

Kirk Teska
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KT/ok